

Message Text

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ORIGIN EUR-12

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMCONSUL MUNICH
INFO AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 084796

MUNICH FOR GILMORE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, HU, XH

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE RFE STORY ON CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN

1. RFE WASHINGTON NEWSROOM IS PREPARING STORY REPORTING RECENT DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING THE CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN. WE WISH TO KNOW WHAT TREATMENT RFE BROADCASTS ON THIS SENSITIVE SUBJECT, AND WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR KEEPING US INFORMED BY CABLE.

2. US PRESS, HUNGARIAN-AMERICANS AND SOME MEMBERS OF CONGRESS HAVE FOCUSED RENEWED INTEREST IN THE CROWN OF ST. STEPHEN, BECAUSE REP. VANIK (D-OHIO) INDICATED IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER MARCH 26 AND EXCERPTED IN THE MARCH 27 NYTIMES THAT HE FAVORED RETURN OF THE CROWN AND BECAUSE OF PRESS SPECULATION THAT

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WITH THE SIGNING APRIL 6 OF A CULTURAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES AGREEMENT WITH HUNGARY RETURN OF THE CROWN WAS NEAR.

3. UPI AND THE HUNGARIAN-AMERICAN PRESS HAVE IDENTIFIED VANIK AND REP BILL FRENZEL (R-MINN.) AS FAVORING RETURN OF THE CROWN AND REP MARY ROSE OAKAR (D-OHIO) AS AN

ACTIVE OPPONENT OF RETURN. RFE HAS APPARENTLY CONTACTED ALL THREE AND RECEIVED THEIR VIEWS DIRECTLY, AS WELL AS

COPIES OF THEIR RECENT CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND OUR REPLIES. IT PLANS TO REPORT THIS DIVERGENCE OF VIEWS IN CONGRESS TOGETHER WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S POSITION.

4. IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH RFE NEWSPERSONNEL, THE DEPARTMENT HAS CHARACTERIZED PRESS REPORTS LINKING THE CROWN AND EXCHANGES AGREEMENT AS BOTH SPECULATIVE AND INCORRECT. IN FACT, OUR POSITION HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY NOT TO LINK RETURN OF THE CROWN TO THE RESOLUTION OF ANY SPECIFIC ISSUE OR ISSUES IN US-HUNGARIAN RELATIONS. WE CAUTIONED RFE REPORTERS THAT THE SUBJECT OF THE CROWN IS A DELICATE ONE AND RECEIVED ASSURANCES THAT THIS WAS FULLY UNDERSTOOD AND THAT THE STORY WOULD BE HANDLED AS FACTUAL NEWS NOT AS AN INTERPRETIVE PIECE.
VANCE

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